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The above is probably sufficient to convince the reader that a better knowledge of Somaize would be desirable and that a cautious, discriminating attitude, unbiased by what has thus far been written about Somaize's revelations on seventeenth century literature and society, would be advisable in the perusal of his works.

J. WARSHAW.

*University of Missouri.*

## SOME NOTES ON *HAMLET*

### I

Rowe is our authority for the statement that Shakespeare acted "the ghost in his own Hamlet." Yet Shakespeare, as we know from several sources, was an actor of ability; consequently it seems hardly likely that his share in the performance of the play would consist of only a minor part requiring the utterance of less than a hundred lines. Since it was common for players to assume more than one rôle, we may conclude that Shakespeare acted some other character in addition to the Ghost. An examination of the text shows that this character would be limited to (1) Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, or Osric; (2) Claudius, Laertes or Fortinbras; (3) the First Player.

It is highly unlikely that he assumed the comic part of Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, or Osric. This would not be in keeping with the statement by John Davies (*The Scourge of Folly*, 1610), that he played "some kingly parts," with the statement of his brother that he performed the dignified part of Adam in *As You Like It*, or with his assumption of the part of the Ghost in *Hamlet*.

Again, it seems unlikely that he took the part of Claudius, for the rôle of Claudius would be in itself quite enough for one actor—say Heminge, or Condell; and for him to assume this in addition to the rôle of the Ghost would put too heavy a burden of acting upon his shoulders. Furthermore, in Act I, scene 2,

Claudius enters thirty-three lines after the exit of the Ghost. This would hardly allow time for the necessary changes in costume.

And since, in the scene just referred to, Laertes enters with Claudius, he seems also to be excluded from consideration; for surely it would be impossible for Shakespeare during the quick utterance of thirty-three lines to change himself from a ghost "so majestic" into a young gallant ready for "the primrose path of dalliance"—if, indeed, Shakespeare's qualities as an actor fitted him for such a rôle.

The character of Fortinbras, who speaks only twenty-six lines, is histrionically too insignificant for a "sharer." Any "hireling" properly costumed might perform his part satisfactorily.

This process of elimination leaves for our consideration the First Player. No objection, I believe, can be raised to him. The rôle is sufficiently important to justify Shakespeare in assuming it; at no time does it interfere with the rôle of the Ghost; and its lines throughout are in keeping with what we know of Shakespeare's quality as an actor. The same voice that uttered the solemn conjurations of the Ghost could have spoken well the story "of Priam's slaughter," and equally well, too, the lines of the Player King in "The Murder of Gonzago." Furthermore, if Shakespeare acted the part of the Ghost, and then of the Player King, this fact could be used to heighten greatly the effect of the "Mouse Trap"; for the Player King could be made to resemble closely in features the elder Hamlet.

### II

*Laertes.* . . . Hold off the earth awhile  
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms:

[*Leaps into the grave.*

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead. . .  
*Hamlet* [*Advancing*]. . . This is I,  
Hamlet the Dane. [*Leaps into the grave.*<sup>1</sup>

The leaping of Laertes and of Hamlet into the grave of Ophelia has always seemed to me both startling and unpleasing. Surely the dead body of the unfortunate Ophelia might be

<sup>1</sup> V, i, 272-81.

spared such an outrage. Moreover, the action seems rather inappropriate on the part of Laertes, who throughout invariably does what he thinks the world expects of him. No editor of the play, so far as I am aware, has attempted, by any explanation, to make this action less startling or less painful to the reader.

Recently, while examining Richard Brathwaite's play, *Mercurius Britannicus* (1640), I came upon the following passage:

"What canst thou finde in this spacious Theater of the world, which is worthy thy smallest teare? where servants are made Lords, Lords servants: the Masters head is cut off, the servant riseth up and climbs into his place: wives bewaile the funerall of their husbands, counterfeit teares, *and offer to leape into their graves*; and yet before one worme hath entred into the winding sheete, or before the flowres are withered wherewith the coarse was garnished, they entertaine new affections, and kindle new nuptiall tapers."

Does this passage suggest that offering to leap into the grave was in the seventeenth century sometimes used as an exaggerated expression of sorrow? There is absolutely nothing to indicate that Brathwaite was echoing *Hamlet*. If we can believe that Laertes's conduct was suggested by the occurrence even rarely of this sensational mode of expressing sorrow, we can better understand the scene in *Hamlet*; for Laertes's conduct would then appear more natural, and, like his bearding the King with a drawn sword, thoroughly in keeping with his newly assumed rôle of a melodramatic hero. Of course more references to leaping into the grave (as a real or an imaginary way of expressing sorrow)<sup>2</sup> are needed to render this suggestion plausible.

### III

Hamlet's attempt to make his friends swear, in which he shifts to four several places on the stage<sup>3</sup> ("Hic et ubique? then we'll shift our ground. . . . Once more remove, good

<sup>2</sup>It is not necessary to conceive of the "leaping into the grave" as an actual custom; it may have figured merely in the imagination of the literary artist.

<sup>3</sup>I, v, 148-82.

friends") is apt to be taken as grotesque. Yet perhaps there was something conventional in this, as Professor Bradley suggests (*Shakespearean Tragedy*, p. 412). I am reminded of the attempt of Balaam to curse the Children of Israel (*Numbers* xxiii-xxiv). Each time Balaam found himself unable to utter his curse, and each time Balak suggested a removal of ground ("And Balak said unto him, Come; I pray thee, with me unto another place. . . . And Balak said unto Balaam, Come, I pray thee, I will bring thee unto another place."). This scene had already appeared on the stage of the mystery plays. In the *Processus Prophetarum* of the Chester Cycle the stage directions read as follows:

*Tunc Balaam versus austrum.\**

*Tunc adducens secum Balaam in montem et ad australem partem respiciens dicat ut sequitur.*

*Tunc adducet eum ad borealem partem.*

*Ad occidentalem partem.*

It will be observed that in his attempt to curse the Israelites Balaam visits the four corners of the stage, as does Hamlet. Such "business" is surely no more grotesque in *Hamlet* than it is in the Chester Play; and perhaps the convention (if it be such) may after all be traced back to the Bible.

### IV

*Ophelia.* Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind. There, my lord.

*Hamlet.* Ha, ha! are you honest [=virtuous]?<sup>4</sup>

Hamlet's "ha, ha" is invariably printed as though it were a part of his utterance to Ophelia,—a laugh, perhaps; yet a laugh is hardly in keeping with the rest of the sentence, or with his following speech. The exclamation, I believe, is not addressed to Ophelia at all, but is an involuntary utterance of surprise, and should, therefore, be printed as an aside. At this exact moment Hamlet becomes aware of the presence of the King and Polonius in the upper gallery. Perhaps as Ophelia made her

<sup>4</sup>Omitted from ms. Harl. 2124; supplied from another version.

<sup>5</sup>III, i, 101-3.

most tempting speech, the eavesdroppers, in their anxiety to see, leaned forward and slightly moved the curtains.<sup>6</sup> From this point on Hamlet seems to be talking not only to Ophelia, but to the King and Polonius. For example:

I am proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offenses at my beck than . . .

*Hamlet.* Where's your father?

*Ophelia.* At home, my lord.

*Hamlet.* Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool no where but in's own house. . . .

Those that are married—all but one—shall live.

If this interpretation of the words "ha, ha" be right, we are helped to answer a very important question, which Professor Bradley gives up (*Shakespearean Tragedy*, p. 157): "The question whether or no Hamlet suspects or detects the presence of listeners . . . in the absence of an authentic stage tradition . . . seems to be unanswerable."

## V

Hamlet, Horatio and Marcellus are on the platform at midnight;<sup>7</sup> the air bites shrewdly, for it is very cold. The three men are awaiting the coming of a ghost which, they know, invariably appears "in the dead waste and middle of the night." The clock has already struck twelve, and they are naturally somewhat nervous, with all their thoughts bent directly upon the fearful visitation that is imminent. Yet they feel, quite naturally also, that they must talk. The boom of ordinance shot off within starts the conversation about "the custom of the country" that is "more honoured in the breach than in the observance." Horatio and Marcellus are very quiet, almost inattentive, and Hamlet, uninterrupted, finally launches out into a rambling sentence of extraordinary length. It would be hard to find a sentence more involved, or more difficult to follow. Yet Hamlet, we know, could be remarkably concise and clear when he wished;

<sup>6</sup>This, I believe, is the way in which the scene is commonly acted on the modern stage.

<sup>7</sup>I, iv, 23-9.

and so could Shakespeare. The sentence runs thus:

So, oft it chances in particular men,  
That, for some vicious mole of nature in them,  
As in their birth—wherein they are not guilty,  
Since nature cannot choose his origin—  
By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,  
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,  
Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens  
The form of plausive manners, that these men,  
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,  
Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,—  
Their virtues else—be they as pure as grace,  
As infinite as man may undergo—  
Shall, in the general censure, take corruption,  
From that particular fault: the dram of eale  
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt  
To his own scandal.

Is it not clear that Shakespeare *meant* for Hamlet to speak in this labyrinthine manner? Did he not construct the sentence to show us that although Hamlet keeps on talking, his mind is not on what he is saying? Furthermore, did not Shakespeare intend for the audience to lose the thought in the maze of the sentence, and, as a result, direct its whole attention anxiously to the appearance of the ghost? The sentence, I believe, shows us Shakespeare, the conscious artist, seeking to reveal the mental state of the speaker; and then, as a by-product perhaps, to focus the attention of the audience upon the entrance of a highly important character.

This interpretation of the sentence suggests certain remarks about the last clause, "dram . . . scandal," which has given so much trouble to students of the play. (1) If this clause be so emended as to make a clear, epigrammatic sentence, perfectly intelligible to every one in the audience, the effect aimed at in the long, involved sentence that precedes would be destroyed. Yet nearly all the suggested emendations have been of this nature. Thus Staunton suggests "A *dram* of ill doth all the noble substance of a *pound* to his own scandal;" and he supports this emendation by quoting two epigrams: "Where ev'ry *dram* of gold contains a *pound* of dross"—Quarles's *Emblems*; and "A *dram* of sweet is worth a *pound* of sowre"—Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. (2) It seems better to regard this clause not

as a corrupt reading of a short, pithy sentence, but rather as the beginning of another long rambling sentence, interrupted by the sudden appearance of the Ghost. If we place after the word "scandal" a dash instead of a period, we shall secure the effect evidently aimed at by the playwright in the preceding sentence.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps it would be going too far to accuse Shakespeare of having deliberately made this last phrase unintelligible; but at least that general effect seems to have been in his mind. (3) If we consider the large number of parenthetical phrases in the sentence that precedes, introduced obviously for the purpose of rendering the sentence involved and the thought obscure, we may feel inclined to favor the change of "of a doubt" to the parenthetical phrase "out o' doubt."

The sentence arranged in accordance with these suggestions would harmonize perfectly with the speech as a whole:

The dram of eale

Doth all the noble substance—out o' doubt—  
To his own scandal—

*Horatio.* [Interrupting] Look, my lord, it comes.

## VI

I give below a few changes in the text of the play as usually printed, which have suggested themselves as possible or desirable.

(a) IV, vi, 201.

Ophelia has just entered and for the first time exhibited before Laertes her pathetic madness.

"His beard was white as snow,  
All flaxen was his poll:  
He is gone, he is gone  
And we cast away moan:  
God ha' mercy on his soul!"

And of all Christian souls, I pray God,  
God be wi' ye. [Exit.]

*Laertes.* Do you see this, O God?

<sup>8</sup>This dash was suggested by J. D. M., in the *Athenæum* 1886; and Keightley, in the *Expositor*, 288, has advanced somewhat the same arguments for accepting it. The suggestion, however, seems not to have received much attention, hence I give here the line of reasoning by which I quite independently arrived at the same conclusion.

This is the usual way of printing Laertes's speech. But does he ask this question of God? Should not the line be interpreted thus?

*Laer.* [To King] Do you see this? O God!

(b) V, ii, 153.

*Ham.* What's his weapon?

*Osric.* Rapier and dagger.

*Ham.* That's two of his weapons; but, well.

The last line would be rendered more intelligible if printed thus:

*Ham.* That's two of his weapons.—But? Well?

That is, Osric is embarrassed by the banter to which he has been subjected, and Hamlet in his impatience is prodding him on to further speech.

(c) II, ii, 353–68.

"Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace: but there is, sir, an aery of children, little eyasses, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically clapped for't: these are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages—so they call them—that . . .

"Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players—as it is most like, if their means are no better—their writers do them wrong to make them exclaim against their own succession?"

The meaning of the passages quoted would be rendered clearer and more forceful by printing the phrases *common stages* and *common players* in marks of quotation, for the following reason. Shakespeare, in his remarks about the city players, had in mind the bitter attack upon the public playhouses made by the chapel children in 1600–1. The latter taunted their grown-up rivals with the well-known statute which classified "common players" with "rogues, vagabonds and sturdy beggars." Ben Jonson was the chief playwright for the children, and his *Cynthia's Revels* (1600) and *Poetaster* (1601) were doubtless their main attraction during the time that Shakespeare was writing *Hamlet*. These plays are very abusive of the public theatres; and in particular *Poetaster* directs most of its attack at a

wretched actor, *Histrion*, who, it is almost certain, was meant to represent the Globe company. Furthermore, in *Poetaster* Jonson points his finger directly at the Globe: "Life of Pluto! an you stage me, stinkard, your mansions shall sweat for 't, your tabernacles, varlets, your *Globes*, and your Triumphs;"<sup>9</sup> and twice the statute is thrust into *Histrion's* face ("They forget they are in the statute"; "I'll have the statute repealed for thee"). Most important of all, Jonson uses the specific expressions that Shakespeare quotes: "Common stages"—*Cynthia's Revels*, p. 147; "will press forth on common stages"—*Idem*, p. 176; "a tragedy of yours coming forth for the common players"—*Poetaster*, p. 211. When, therefore, Shakespeare said "so they call them," he was speaking quite literally, and marks of quotation would bring out more forcefully what he meant his audience to understand.

JOSEPH QUINCY ADAMS, JR.

Cornell University.

## ZWEI GEDICHTE VON GOETHE

### I. DAS BLUTLIED

Schon in den *Mod. Lang. Notes*, Februar 1912, habe ich ein paar Notizen zu dem Liede geliefert, hier sollen die Quellen nachgewiesen werden (vgl. WA, I, 14, 310 f.).

Wo flieszet heisses Menschen Blut  
Der Dunst ist allem Zauber gut  
Die grau und schwarze Brüderschaft  
Sie schöpft zu neuen Wercken Kraft  
Was deutet auf Blut ist uns genehm,  
Was Blut vergieszt ist uns bequem.  
Um Glut und Blut umkreiszt den Reihn  
In Glut soll Blut vergossen seyn.

Die Dirne winckt es ist schon gut  
Der Säufer trinckt es deutet auf Blut  
Der Blick der Tranck er feuert an  
Der Dolch ist blanck es ist gethan.

<sup>9</sup>Cunningham's ed. of Jonson in three volumes, Vol. I, p. 232. The other page references are to the same edition.

Ein Blut Quell rieselt nie allein  
Es laufen andre Bächlein drein  
Sie wälzen sich von Ort zu Ort  
Es reiszt der Strom die Ströme fort.

Der *Terminus post quem* für die Entstehung ist etwa der Anfang des Februar 1783. In dem damals erschienenen Heft von Gedike und Biesters *Berlinischer Monatsschrift* standen S. 151 f. in einem Reisebericht die folgenden Bemerkungen über Wallenstein:

"Von Zittau aus wandte ich mich nach Friedland und Neustädten in Böhmen, und fand da bald die Unterthanen arm, die Häuser schlecht, und schlecht angebaute, auch wüste liegende Felder. Die Folgen von Religionszwang und Sklaverei. Mir schien es, *der Geist Wallensteins ruhe noch auf den gegenwärtigen Beamten dieser Herrschaften*. Ich besah mit einer Art von Grausen das vor dem Städtchen Friedland auf einer Anhöhe liegende alte Schloß, zu welchem zu *Frohnarbeiten* hunderte von Einwohnern aus der Ferne nach dem Schalle einer Glocke herbei eilten. Hier wars, sagte ich mir, wo Wallenstein thronte; hier wohnten seine Obersten und Anhänger, die *auf seinen Wink warteten*, als ihr Gebieter. . . . Deutschland verwüsten, und *die Erde mit Blut tränken wollte!* . . . Aber bald *nöthigte das Misstrauen Ferdinands* (dieses allen schwachen Leuten so eigene Laster) den Wallenstein, *höhere und rebellische Gedanken zu fassen*: den er aber nachher weder abzusetzen noch zur Rede zu stellen wagte, sondern ihn auf gut asiatisch *meuchelmörderisch tödten liesz*. Wenn Wallenstein . . . der bewährten Kriegsregel gefolgt wäre, und *die Scheide weggeworfen hätte, nachdem er seinen Degen einmal gegen seinen Herrn gezogen hatte*, so glänzte heute vielleicht sein Name. . . ."

Es schloß sich (S. 153 f.) ein Gedicht an mit der Überschrift *Die Zeit*:

O Zeit wer klagte dich nicht schon!  
Dir jammern Vater, Mutter, Sohn;  
O Zeit, in deiner Fluthen Grab,  
Rann Manche Thräne schon hinab!

Wir wogen hin, wir wogen her,  
Zwar schwebend auch, doch stürzend mehr;  
Kaum schwimmt auf dir das Abendroth,  
Da deine Fluth schon wieder droht.

Von fernen Ufern führest du  
Dem Mädchen oft den Jüngling zu;  
Aus Fernen sammlet oft durch dich  
Der Freunde treues Häuflein sich;